Michigan Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips

Friday, August 11, 2006

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Prepared by the DHS Office of Communications (517) 373-7394

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ROCHELLE RILEY: Lawsuit complicates state's foster care improvements

BY ROCHELLE RILEY

FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

August 11, 2006

Michigan is becoming known as a state that must be pulled into the 21st Century.

It has had to deal with a don't-know-how-we-didn't-see-it-coming auto industry crisis. It faces expected chaos as hundreds of local entities fight to retain separate governments, school districts and transportation services rather than cheaper, smarter regional cooperatives.

It has finally acknowledged the long-term impact of brain drain.

And Tuesday, the state was sued by a New York-based children's rights group that wants the courts to oversee Michigan's troubled foster care system. The suit charges that Michigan violates children's civil rights by keeping them in foster care too long and forcing them to move repeatedly from one home to another.

Real improvements in works

The lawsuit, filed by the New York-based Children's Rights child advocacy agency, pits two women against each other: Marcia Lowry, a 65-year-old wife and mother who nine years ago founded CR to save endangered kids, and Marianne Udow, 52, a former health administrator, who 2 1/2 years ago took over Michigan's beleaguered Department of Human Services and has worked since to change its history as an understaffed, poorly run behemoth more devoted to process than progress.

The sad irony is the lawsuit comes amid some real progress at DHS. For instance, the state has decreased the number of times children are placed and re-placed in different foster homes. Five years ago, four of five children endured multiple placements. Last year, 40% were placed only once.

Udow also has shifted the department's focus from family destruction to family strengthening to keep kids out of foster care. Its Family to Family program, now in 38 counties, tries to defuse crises before children are moved. And Michigan is one of five states that, as part of a federal pilot program, can use its federal funds for prevention and early intervention efforts as well as foster care.

"They have a lot of things (charged in the lawsuit) that go back years before I was even here," Udow said in an interview. "We shared with them progress we've made ... and they were unaware and, it seemed to appear, uninterested.

"My question is why now, and why Michigan?" Udow said of a group that has sued more than a dozen other states and cities on similar grounds.

Demands and funds

If the courts approve a monitor, the Human Services Department will struggle with making fixes demanded by a national group while being bound by a state Legislature that isn't providing enough funding now.

"It will be easy (to meet CR's standards) if they're reasonable," Udow said. "The thing I'm most worried about is if they think we're going to have unlimited money. With the Legislature eliminating the Single Business Tax, we're going to be

http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060811/OPINION02/608110339/1122&template=pi... 08/11/2006

in trouble. We do want more money, but where is it going to come from?"

Lowry, undaunted, said that her group was invited to investigate Michigan by local foster professionals and others sick of waiting for change. She said the state has had enough time -- and can find the money.

"In every state we've been in," Lowry said, "... the state is not bringing in available federal money, and almost all of the states, including Michigan, are not getting children out of foster care either back home or into an adoptive family in anything resembling a timely manner."

If Michigan had acted sooner and with some foresight, Children's Rights wouldn't have come to town. But I bet, too, that current state officials are tired of paying for the "sins of their fathers."

ROCHELLE RILEY'S columns appear Wednesdays, Fridays and Sunday. Contact her at <u>rriley99@freepress.com</u> or 313-223-4473.

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From Gongwer Volume #45, Report #153 Thursday, August 10, 20

UDOW, HARDIMAN TO DISCUSS RACIAL EQUITY IN WELFARE

During the 2006 National Conference of State Legislatures gathering in Nashville next week, Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow and Sen. Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood) will speak on the overrepresentation of minority children in the state's welfare system.

According to a report released in March (See <u>Gongwer Michigan Report, March 21, 2006</u>) white children represent 72.1 percent of the total population of minors in Michigan, but only 38.8 percent of those in foster care. Black children represent 17.5 percent of the total population, but 53.2 percent of those in foster care.

Native American and black children historically represent a disproportionate population of welfare recipients across the nation

"Michigan is taking a comprehensive approach to addressing this national concern," Ms. Udow said in a statement. "The recommendations made by the task force in Michigan include initiatives we have already put in place as well as new strategies that will make a lasting difference for Michigan's children."

Joining the NCSL panel will also be Robin Arnold-Williams, secretary for the Washington Department of Social and Health Services; House Speaker Pro Tempore Lois DeBerry of Tennessee; Rep. John McCoy of Washington and Viola Miller, commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

MIRS – Aug. 11, 2006

Bits and Tidbits

<u>Udow To Address NCSL Annual Conference</u>

Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Marianne <u>UDOW</u> will be addressing the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) annual meeting in Nashville next week.

The topic will be efforts the state undertook to address the overrepresentation of children of color in the state's child welfare system. In March, a state task force on the overrepresentation of children of color in child welfare, co-chaired by Udow and Detroit-based Skillman Foundation CEO Carol **GOSS**, released a report that detailed recommendations aimed at providing better outcomes for children of color served by the state's child welfare system.

In every state, African American and Native American children are over-represented in the child welfare system.

"Michigan is taking a comprehensive approach to addressing this national concern," Udow said. "The recommendations made by the task force in Michigan include initiatives we have already put in place as well as new strategies that will make a lasting difference for Michigan's children."

Joining Udow in a panel discussion will be Sen. Bill <u>HARDIMAN</u> (R-Grand Rapids), chair of the Senate Families and Human Services Committee, that will examine the causes and extent of this problem, discuss how some states have made racial equity a public policy priority, and identify promising practices to reduce the disproportionate number of minorities and negate outcomes for children of color in child welfare.

LANSING

Youth academy eligibility seminar is today in Lansing

The Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy will present an eligibility seminar at 6 p.m. today, at the National Guard Armory, 2500 South Washington Ave.

The Academy is a free, voluntary, military-based program geared toward at-risk youth ages 16 to 18.

This seminar is mandatory to be considered for the Academy. Parent or legal guardian must attend the seminar if the applicant is under 18 years of age. Reservations are not required.

For more information, or to reserve a spot, call (800)372-0523, or visit www.ngycp.org/state/mi/howtoapply.php.

- Lansing State Journal
- Aug. 11, 2006





Youths say YES to city cleanup

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, August 11, 2006

By Melissa Burden

mburden@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6316

FLINT - About 60 middle school students are setting down their PlayStation controllers and forgoing a few extra hours of sleep to take a different route to summer vacation.

The students, who attended Holmes Middle School this past year, picked up rakes and shovels to beautify neighborhoods on the city's north side.

QUICK TAKE

Neighborhood Celebration

When: Non- 4 p.m., Saturday

The students are part of Youth Empowerment Solutions for Peaceful Communities - known as YES, a community change project aimed to make students leaders and prevent youth violence.

"The kids come up with the projects," said YES program manager Everett Roberts. "They connect with the neighborhood advocates to make it happen."

Ninth-grader Kyleah Brann, 14, said she got involved in YES "to make Flint look better and make it have a better reputation than maybe it does right now."

She and a about 20 students and neighborhood volunteers worked last week to clean up Clara Hilborn Park, off King Avenue north of Pierson Road. The park is a thoroughfare for many children and neighborhood residents heading to Bryant Elementary School or a nearby shopping plaza.

Bright flowers were planted in two flower gardens, weeds almost as tall as some of the students were pulled and old playground equipment was painted.

"It gives us something to do," said ninth-grader De'Ontay Curlee, 13.

The park clean-up was one of four projects students and neighborhood volunteers have been working on this summer.

They also cleaned up Serenity Park on Philadelphia Boulevard between Horton Avenue and Selby Street, installing benches and a bird bath and planting flowers.

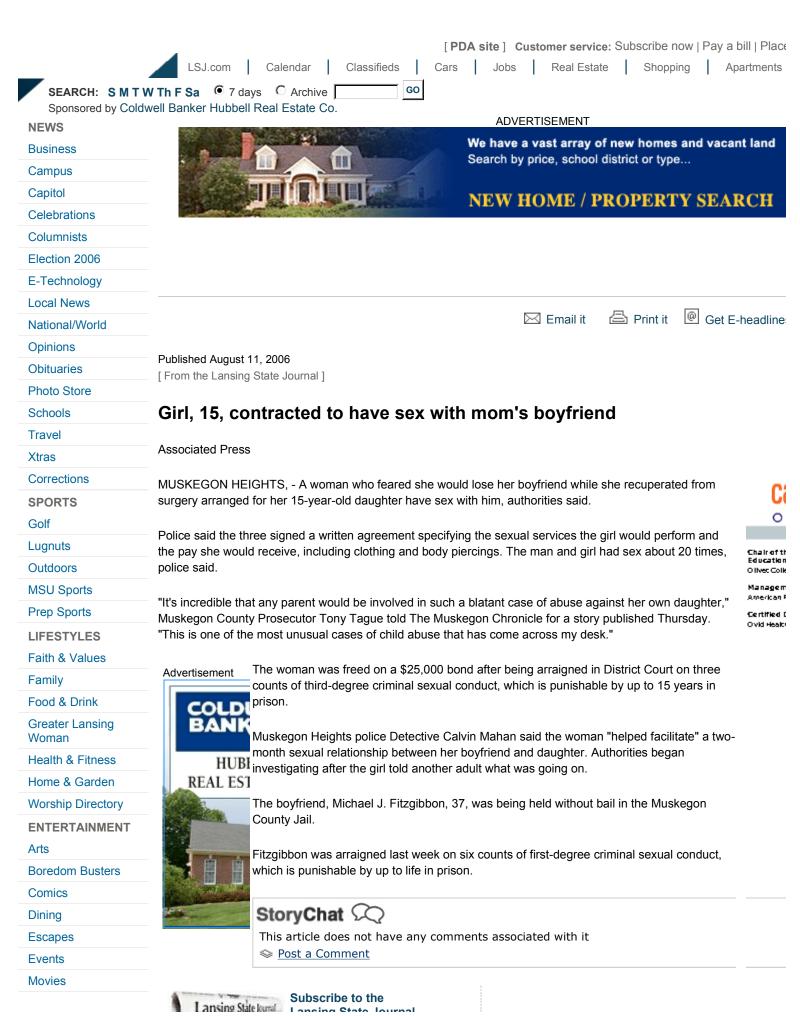
They've also painted neighborhood murals and worked to create a Rosa Parks Peace Park at Fleming Road and Defreest Street.

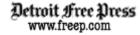
One aim of YES is to build pride in the community, Roberts said.

"These participation projects are where the kids live," he said,.

Eighth-grader LaTisha Whiteside, 15, said last week that the Clara Hilborn Park was starting to look better since students started working on it in June.

"This used to be my old school," said LaTisha, referring to the soon-to-be razed former Pierson Elementary School. "Now that school got shut down, it (the park) turned down."





A boy, a gun and another tragic death

Detroiter, 4, kills himself with weapon left under bed

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

August 11, 2006

A 4-year-old boy apparently shot himself to death early Thursday with a powerful handgun he found under a bed in a home on Detroit's east side.

The home belongs to a 59-year-old Detroit police officer, Louis Anderson, and the .40-caliber Glock semiautomatic pistol was issued to him by the Detroit Police Department, officials said.

The incident occurred in the 15800 block of Park Grove about 12:36 a.m. Thursday, according to a preliminary police report. Anderson, who was babysitting the 4-year-old and three other children, was asleep when he awoke to a loud boom.

A bullet from the gun tore through the head of the boy, Kenneth Thomas, and lodged in the wall, officials said. Kenneth was not related to Anderson, police said.

Anderson was placed on administrative leave pending further investigation. Neither he nor Kenneth's mother, identified as Jewelry Thomas, whose age and address were not available, could be reached for comment.

A preliminary report on the death calls it an accidental shooting, according to police.

Maria Miller, a spokeswoman for Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, said her office had not received the final report on the shooting.

Prosecutors are likely to decide next week whether to seek criminal charges, Miller said.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or ikresnak@freepress.com.

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News** To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

August 11, 2006

Boy fatally shot with officer's gun

Four-year-old shoots and kills himself after finding an off-duty Detroit policeman's service weapon.

Oralandar Brand-Williams / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- A 4-year-old boy shot and killed himself early Thursday morning with the gun of a Detroit police officer who was baby-sitting him at a home on the city's east side.

Police say the off-duty officer, 59-year-old Louis Anderson, was watching four children when the shooting occurred on the 15800 block of Park Grove Street.

Anderson was in another room when he heard a loud blast and found the child on the floor with a gunshot wound to the head just after midnight Thursday, police said. The gun was under the bed, police said. The boy was identified as Kenneth Thomas.

Detroit Police spokesman James Tate said the gun was a Glock and was the officer's department-issued weapon. The guns have a reputation for having a hair trigger and can easily discharge. The safety in a Glock is in the trigger mechanism.

"We have submitted paperwork to the Prosecutor's Office," said Tate about the incident.

Maria Miller, a spokeswoman for Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, said the office would weigh what, if any, charges to file.

"We don't expect to have any decision until next week," she said.

Some residents in the area gathered near the family's home after hearing of the death.

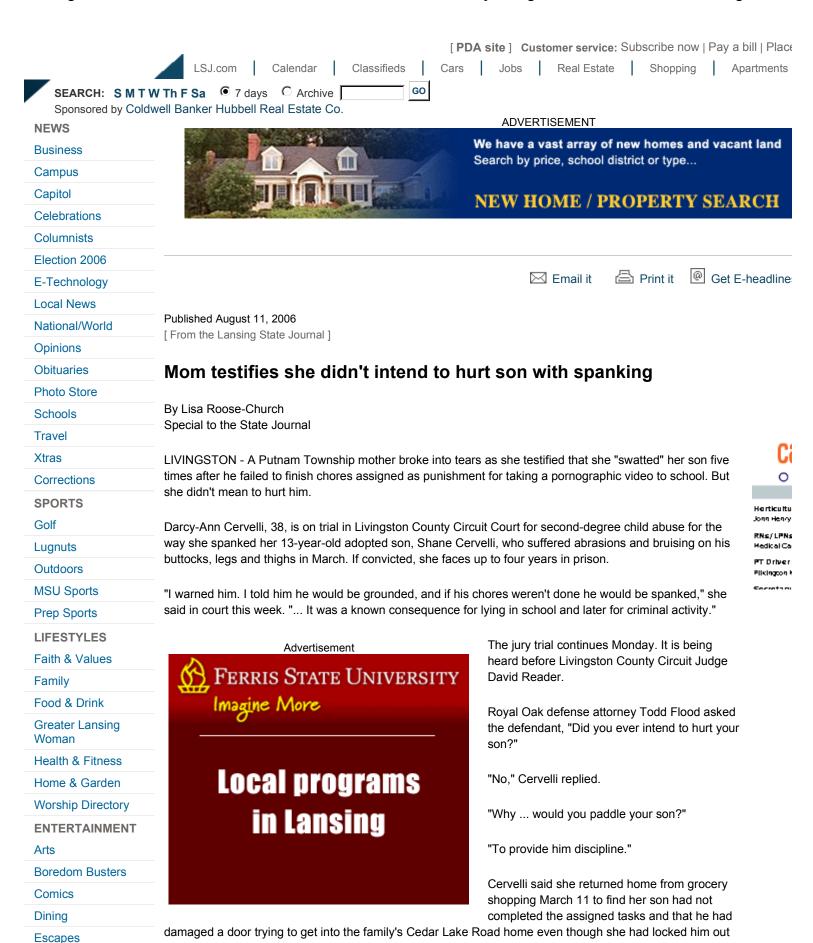
Charles Alston Jr., a 36-year-old father of three, wondered how the boy could have such easy access to the officer's gun.

"Being a police officer, it's supposed to be out of reach," said Alston, who was visiting his mother Thursday when he heard the news of the shooting. "When you're off-duty, you're off-duty," said Alston. "Your gun is supposed to be locked up."

Anderson is assigned to the Detroit Police Department's Southwestern District on Fort Street. Police officials say Anderson's record on the city's police force has been clean. He has been placed on administrative leave.

Detroit News Staff Writer Ronald J. Hansen contributed to this report. You can reach Oralandar Brand-Williams at (313) 222-2027 or bwilliams@detnews.com.

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that she used to "swat him five times."

Cervelli ordered her son to go to his bedroom while she went into hers and retrieved a black, rubber paddle

of the house.

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Cervelli said she initially disciplined Shane using various consequences including writing letters explaining why a particular behavior was inappropriate and suggest his own punishments, from loss of privileges such as using the family's trampoline.

However, none of her methods were working, Cervelli said.

StoryChat CQ

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August 11, 2006

Girl pleads guilty in school bus attack

She was caught on tape hitting fellow Roseville elementary pupil; defense lawyer claims provocation.

Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News

MOUNT CLEMENS -- An 11-year-old girl accused of beating another girl on a Roseville school bus pleaded guilty Thursday in Macomb Circuit Court to a charge of assault and battery.

The attack on the way home from Roseville Alumni Memorial Elementary School was caught on videotape and occurred after the girl taunted the victim, also 11, about getting good grades, police said.

"We have zero tolerance to school violence. Bullying will not be tolerated," said Eric Smith, Macomb County prosecutor, adding that no plea bargain was offered.

The bullying "was so bad that the little girl did not want to say anything because she was afraid things would get worse," Smith said.

Police say that after a year of taunting, the assailant leaped from her seat June 8 and began hitting the girl with both fists as their school bus was about to drop them off.

The offender was charged with misdemeanor assault, which is a 93-day misdemeanor. A sentencing date wasn't set.

Cecil D. St. Pierre, the attorney for the girl accused in the attack, said the videotape shown on local media outlets was not complete, that "there was provocation."

He wouldn't comment further on the guilty plea, but added that there was no history between the two girls before the bus incident.

The girl accused in the attack no longer attends the school, and there has been no contact between the two girls, said Darra Slanec, Macomb County assistant prosecutor.

Earlier this year, a similar attack on an Anchor Bay school bus attracted national attention when the 10-year-old victim, Chester Gala, and his father appeared on NBC's "Today" show.

That attack occurred on May 12.

The two teenagers accused in that case are awaiting a jury trial. The 13-year-old student who was shown beating Chester was charged with assault, a misdemeanor.

That incident occurred on a bus ride home from Anchor Bay Middle School North.

His 14-year-old accomplice, who appears in the videotape poking his finger at Chester, was charged with misdemeanor assault. On July 10, Circuit Judge Tracey Yokich issued a personal protection order requiring the 13-year-old boy to stay away from Chester.

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Torture of boy suspected

Friday, August 11, 2006

By Steven Hepker

shepker@citpat.com -- 768-4923

Investigators said a Jackson couple brutally beat a 6-year-old, taped him into painful positions and made him stand on his toes until he collapsed.

Arrest warrants signed Thursday allege the county's first case of felony torture, punishable by life in prison under a state law enacted March 1.

"This was pure torture," Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mark Blumer said today.

The boy's mother, Jeannie Marie Nyies, 30, and her boyfriend, Ian Anderson, 32, both of 363 Carr St., were expected to be charged with one count of torture and one count of first-degree child abuse. They were jailed but not arraigned yet this morning.

A relative called city police Wednesday, and detectives and Children Protective Services investigators acted quickly, Blumer said. The boy was hospitalized and will be returned to his biological father.

"Medical testimony will establish the case," Blumer said, indicating the boy was beaten with kitchen utensils until his skin fell off in places.

"Even veteran investigators and social workers were appalled at the horrendous violence," Blumer said.

The mother and son live with Anderson. Blumer said the child was so scared of the man he tiptoed around the house to avoid offending him.

"He saw him tiptoeing and made him stand on his toes for an hour, until he collapsed," Blumer said.

The couple also used duct tape to hold the boy in painful positions for extensive periods, police allege.

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2-year-old boy hit by car in critical condition

Friday, August 11, 2006

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

A 2-year-old Holton boy was in critical condition this morning after being struck by a car Thursday when he wandered into the road near the intersection of Holton and Marvin roads in Holton Township.

Antonio Javier Klizing, 8515 Holton Duck Lake Road, initially was taken to Hackley Hospital in Muskegon and later by air to the DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids where he remained in critical condition this morning.

According to the Michigan State Police in Grand Haven, the boy was playing in a field about 10 a.m. Thursday when he wandered into the road near Holton and Marvin in Holton Township.

The driver, James Bryan McGregor, 68, of Crystal Falls, will not be cited in the case, a Michigan State Police spokesman said.

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Ex-bus driver facing charges

Friday, August 11, 2006

By Scott Hagen

shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

A local man who drove a school bus for more than three decades spent his free time downloading thousands of sexual pictures of young boys onto his computer, police said.

Steven Flick, 57, turned himself into police Thursday and is facing one count of using a computer to commit a crime and one count of possession of child pornography. He was arraigned in District Court and released on a personal-recognizance bond.

Flick served as a bus driver with Jackson Public Schools for 25 years, starting in 1972. He retired from full-time driving in the late 1990s but remained with the district as a substitute driver until spring.

Flick also served as a choir instructor at a downtown church, taught private piano lessons at his home in the 3000 block of Blue Lane in Summit Township and spent time mentoring local children in various outreach programs, said Jackson County sheriff's detective Sgt. Wayne Bisard.

Police are still investigating and asking anyone with information about Flick to come forward.

"We're in the process of investigating the situation and collecting all the pertinent data," said Craig Frazier, the school district's transportation director.

Efforts to reach Superintendent Dan Evans were unsuccessful.

The arrest comes at the end of a joint federal and county investigation -- part of the nationwide Operation Falcon -- designed to haul in potential sexual predators with access to children.

Federal agents first learned of Flick when they raided a business office for a Web site predominately used to buy child pornography from Internet sites. The agents contacted local officials when they learned Flick had access to children on his bus route and through mentoring work.

Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents and local detectives with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office searched the man's house in May. They discovered a hard-drive filled with thousands of sexual images of young boys.

Flick is scheduled to appear for his preliminary examination Aug. 21 in District Judge Charles Falahee's court.

Efforts to reach Flick were unsuccessful. His defense attorney, Chuck Perlos, declined to comment.

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Bond set in child pornography case

Friday, August 11, 2006

LaNIA COLEMAN

THE SAGINAW NEWS

MOUNT PLEASANT -- An Isabella County man faces child pornography charges.

Magistrate Sandra Strauss set a \$500,000 cash or surety bond Wednesday when she arraigned Raymond D. Burton on one count of distributing or promoting child pornography and eight counts of possessing child pornography.

Sheriff's deputies arrested Burton about

1 p.m. Wednesday at a home on East Pere Marquette near County Line in Wise Township. Deputies, who obtained warrants after receiving a tip, seized a computer and an undisclosed number of DVDs containing child pornography, said Sheriff Leo Mioduszewski.

The state Department of Corrections discharged Burton, 41, in March 2002 after he had served four years on a charge of child abusive commercial activity, corrections records show. Burton pleaded guilty to the charge in Midland County, records show.

The distributing/promoting charge carries a maximum sentence of seven years in prison and a \$50,000 fine. Each of the other charges carries a penalty of four years imprisonment and \$10,000 fines.

Burton remained jailed in Isabella County. v

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Article published Aug 11, 2006

Elder care, repeal of business tax topics at Cass forum Lawmakers meet county residents to address concerns.

YaSHEKIA SMALLS Tribune Staff Writer

CASSOPOLIS -- In a county where the senior population is expected to skyrocket over the next decade and where the economy has been sluggish, legislators are talking.

And in Cass County, where health services and schools are losing money and where homelessness concerns have prompted a 10-year plan, officials are fighting an uphill battle.

Three state legislators and two legislative aides took the floor Thursday morning at the Cass District Library, where they highlighted community issues and addressed residents' concerns during a Human Service Coordinating Council legislative forum.

Present were state Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks; state Rep. Neal Nitz, R-Baroda; state Rep. Rick Shaffer, R-Three Rivers; Mary Judnich, aide to U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.; and Al Pscholka, aide to U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph.

Two major issues for audience members were long-term care for the elderly, and the elimination of the state's Single Business Tax, which was repealed Wednesday.Revenues from the repealed tax were about \$1.9 billion, or 25 percent of the state's discretionary income. Legislators are looking for options to replace the Single Business Tax, which was originally slated to end in 2009 but will be phased out next December.

"So we have a great amount of time to do it," Nitz said. "Hopefully we will have some plans ... by the first of the year and start floating out some of those ideas to the House and business communities to see what their thoughts are."

The Single Business Tax was the only general business tax levied by the state. Officials are working to maintain and attract businesses, which will be taxed on profitability, not on investment, Jelinek said.

In terms of health and human services, state programs have experienced great challenges during the past year, with more baby boomers growing older and demand increasing, Shaffer said.

"The question is, is there any hope of funding keeping pace with increasing services to senior citizens?" he said. The single-point-of-entry bill for long-term care that Shaffer sponsored and introduced last fall was approved by the House in May, allowing those needing long-term care to get their information from one source.

The legislation guarantees full choice to consumers for where and how they will receive care support, whether in nursing homes or in their own homes, Shaffer said. About 32 other states have the concept in place, whereas this is Michigan's first, he said.

The average nursing home resident pays between \$4,000 and \$5,000 a month, while those in assisted living without Medicaid pay between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per month. In-home care patients pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 a month, said Shaffer, chair of the Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee.

"The goal is to utilize Medicaid dollars more efficiently," he said. "That's the overall goal of this program."

An eight-county program also allows Michigan to allocate \$20 million over the next two years for four pilot projects that will offer families counseling on long-term care options, Shaffer said.Pscholka said 10 out of 11 appropriations bills have been passed in the House, excluding the Labor-Health and Human Services budget bill. That's because Upton refused to support the bill unless \$7 billion was put back into the budget, Pscholka said.

"I expect that appropriations bill to come up right after the break, right after Labor Day," he said. "So Fred was instrumental in making sure that (amount) was restored into the budget."

School funding was also on the mind of Jelinek, who said \$7,085 per student would be available during the 2006-2007 school year through a basic foundation grant. This is an increase of \$210 over last year.

High school Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests will also become college entrance tests next spring, as well as a basis for the \$2,500 Michigan Merit Award Scholarship for high school seniors. Officials are working to increase the two-year college scholarship, Jelinek said.

"We were looking at increasing it, maybe spreading it over four years to encourage kids to go to college, maybe stay in college," he said. Jelinek also highlighted an upcoming bill that will allow low-income housing authorities to own properties for two years without paying taxes. In this way, they can improve the properties and pass savings on to new homeowners, he said.

Staff writer YaShekia Smalls: yassmalls@sbtinfo.com (269) 687-7001

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Now is prime time to begin winterizing home

By Tanya Berkebile, Cadillac News

CADILLAC - For most people, heating a home can be the most costly monthly bill during the winter months. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, about 40 percent of a home energy budget goes for heating.

"Last year many of you probably saw astronomical heating bills - I did," said Becky Gomez of Northwest Michigan Human Services Agency. "When we filled up our propane tank this year, it was still a pretty big bill. It doesn't look like there will be any relief anytime soon."

To help residents prepare for the winter, Gomez led a weatherizing workshop on behalf of the NMHSA. Besides giving tips to the 20-some people who were in attendance, members of the class also received a free weatherization kit.

"It is never too early to start getting your home ready for winter - this kit should help," Gomez said.

The kit included items such as caulk for windows, plastic covering to keep heat from escaping out windows, hole sealers and energy saving products.

"Windows can be a big source of heat loss during the winter," Gomez said. "Caulking can fill any gaps that allow heat to leave. If you have a 1/16 inch gap, you lose the same energy as a 3-inch hole in the wall."

Putting plastic over windows can also help keep the heat inside a house. The plastic covering can be purchased at most hardware stores.

"What is nice is that the plastic is clear so you can see outside with no problems," Gomez said. "It is easy to do and is pretty inexpensive."

Other products such as energy saving light bulbs, water saving showerheads, a garden hose sprayer and solar nightlights can save a substantial amount of money during a year according to Gomez.

"Doing little things like that can save a lot over a year's time or more," she said. "Even having your refrigerator too cold or your water heater temperature set too high can waste energy and money."

Other things people should look at are how well doors are sealed, if there are any holes under the sink where pipes go into the wall and if any cold air seeps in through electrical outlets.

"You wouldn't believe how much cold air can come through outlets," Gomez said. "You can see how much by putting a flame in front of it and see if it flickers. You can stop that inexpensively by buying (foam) insulators that you put behind the outlet cover. It is really easy to do."

Your local connection

The following are some items in the weatherization kit and how they help keep down winter heating bills:

€ Plastic to put over windows: a clear plastic that keeps heat from escaping out through the windows. There are two common types of plastic, one using a blow dryer and another using plastic snaps to make it stick

€ Hot water gage: besides taking the temperature of the hot water, it gives information on what the hot water in a water heater should be - which is approximately 120 degrees

€ Vinyl sealer: creates a little more of a barrier so a minimal amount of heat will leak through the door when it is shut.

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€ Outlet insulators: the foam fits behind the electrical outlet covers to keep cold air from coming in. To see if your outlets need insulating (or windows and doors), put a flame in front of it to see if it flickers.

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Low-income residents to get access to kidney testing

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

GENESEE COUNTY
THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, August 11, 2006

By Shantell M. Kirkendoll

skirkendoll@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6366

GENESEE COUNTY

Low-income residents to get access to kidney testing

Low-income residents will have easier access to testing for kidney disease after the passage of a new law in Michigan.

State Rep. John J. Gleason, who has had a kidney transplant, is expected to announce the new legislation today at Hurley Medical Center, the region's kidney transplant hospital.

About 20 million Americans have chronic kidney disease, about one in nine adults, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Diagnosing it early can prevent kidney disease from becoming kidney failure.

The new law will allow Medicaid recipients to receive screening, laboratory services, and early intervention services for kidney disease.

- Shantell M. Kirkendoll

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Between The Lines Newspaper
From issue number 1432
Return to PrideSource
Destroyed papers lead to pro-gay education
State employee posts first Gay Pride board on state property
By Dawn Wolfe Gutterman
Originally printed 8/10/2006

cut/Rik Lapham, a child support specialist, stands next to a gay pride board he set up at work.

DETROIT - One state employee's discouragement over destroyed newspapers has led to what may be the first gay pride news board on State of Michigan property.

Rik Lapham, a child support specialist who has worked for the state for 20 years, became fed up after noticing copies of Between The Lines that he had placed in a work magazine rack were repeatedly thrown away.

Noting that a Black History Month board was displayed in February, Lapham inquired about adding a gay pride board "to bring positive information about gay people to an audience that might not otherwise not have access to it."

Early on, Lapham got the impression that his was the first such project to win approval.

"Every time I asked the question it took two weeks to get an answer," he said.

Lapham eventually learned that gay employees are protected from discrimination under the state of Michigan's Department of Human Services policy, and he was given permission to go ahead with the board.

The board, which contained information including influential gay individuals and statements by Corretta Scott King in support of equal marriage rights, was on display from mid-June through July 5, Lapham said.

"I was very deliberate in picking things that could not be refuted and were non-controversial," Lapham said.

Lapham said that the board was located outside of his district manager's office.

"If you were over 5-foot-6, you could see it from everywhere in the building," Lapham said, adding that the board was located in a high foot-traffic area.

Lapham said that response from his co-workers was mostly positive, and that some even gave him materials to use on the board.

Perhaps best yet, Lapham said that since the board went up, no further copies of BTL have been destroyed.

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